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FROM: Congressman Donald M. Fraser  
332 House Office Building  
Washington, D. C. 20515  
Phone: Wash - 202/225-4755  
Mpls - 612/725-2081

FRASER PROPOSES STRICTER CONGRESSIONAL  
OVERSIGHT OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Rep. Donald M. Fraser, D-Minn., today introduced a bill to establish a Joint Committee on Intelligence to oversee the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

Fraser, in a speech on the House floor, said that continuing reports from the press and others give substance to President Harry Truman's 1963 charge that the CIA has "cast a shadow on our historic position" as a free and open society.

"Orders to 'terminate with extreme prejudice' the employment of a Vietnamese double agent; the overthrow of governments in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, and a questionable role in the ouster President Diem in 1963; the funding of the National Student Association; the use of AID as a cover-up for its activities in Laos-- there does indeed seem to be a 'shadow' cast by the CIA...

"But the CIA is not alone. Army intelligence has maintained -- and continues to maintain -- huge files on political dissidents within our own borders. The missions of the Pueblo and Liberty -- the latter of which resulted in the death of 33 crewmen -- were directed by the National Security Agency. And Patrick McGarvey, a former officer of the CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency, describes in a recent issue of a national magazine the DIA's 'don't-make-waves' attitude toward misleading intelligence estimates from Vietnam."

The present "watchdog" system, said the Minneapolis Democrat, "yields no guarantee that anyone in Congress has enough information to affirm the legitimacy of these agencies' activities. In neither House has either of the four committees involved ever issued any report describing the extent of its oversight work. The House Armed Services Subcommittee for the CIA met three times this year and twice last year. The corresponding group in the Senate met only once last year and twice this year. And the agencies they 'oversee'

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have a total budget in the billions and manpower in the tens of thousands -- the exact figure is classified."

Chairmen of the two CIA subcommittees are Rep. L. Mendel Rivers, D-S.C., and Sen. John Stennis, D-Miss.

The Joint Committee would consist of seven members each from the House and Senate. One of its duties, Fraser said, would be to "seek to insure that covert action programs are as few as necessary to guarantee the national security. It would also aim to see that such programs are not inconsistent with publicly expressed national policy.

"The bill requires that the CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, Army Intelligence, Navy Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department keep the Joint Committee fully informed of what they are doing.

"These agencies are intimately involved in foreign policy," Fraser said. "Congress is given a clear-cut constitutional role in the making of that policy -- the legislative branch is charged with concurring to treaties, declaring war, and raising and supporting armies. To carry out these functions responsibly, Congress must make judgments on the moral and political advisability of various kinds of American foreign involvement.

"It is impossible, however, for the Congress to make such judgments on a growing number of executive activities abroad without a much fuller knowledge of what the intelligence agencies are doing.

"Improved congressional oversight, with increased public trust at home and abroad, can only enhance the performance of these agencies."

Introducing the bill with Fraser was Rep. Charles W. Whalen, Jr. R-Ohio. A companion bill is being introduced in the Senate by Senators Eugene J. McCarthy, D-Minn., and Mark O. Hatfield, R-Oreg.